THE PILGRIMS

Most people know the story of the Mayflower, which set sail in 1620 for the New England coast of America. It carried 102 passengers of English origin. Most of the passengers were Pilgrims who were seeking a new home which would be free from religious persecution, yet one in which they could retain their English identity and way of life. The remainder of those on board were seeking a new home for the betterment of their personal situations, or for possible financial gain.

THE MAYFLOWER COMPACT

When the Mayflower was safely anchored at Cape Cod, the Pilgrims drew up a civil document which established the democratic system by which they wished to govern themselves. This document has come to be known as The Mayflower Compact.

John Quincy Adams described The Mayflower Compact as "the first example in modern times of a social compact or system of government instituted by voluntary agreement conformable to the laws of nature, by men of equal rights and about to establish their community in a new country."

THE MAYFLOWER DESCENDANTS

In remembering those early settlers and founders of democracy, the descendants of those Pilgrims have formed a Society for the purpose of 1) perpetuating the memory of their Pilgrim fathers, 2) maintaining the democratic principles of civil and religious liberty as set forth in The Mayflower Compact, and 3) fostering the ideals and institutions of American freedom.

HOW TO PROVE YOUR LINEAGE

The most difficult part of anything is getting started. It will be easier in the beginning to start with yourself and work back through the generations. Keep in mind that you are interested in four key items: names, relationships, dates and places (birth, marriage, death). Set up a sample form to follow as you work your way through the generations back to your Mayflower ancestor. It should follow the example below:

LINEAGE WORK SHEET

1. Your name born at your birth place on your birth date married at your marriage place on your marriage date to your spouse born at spouse's birth place on spouse's birth date.

2. Father's name born at father's birth place on father's birth date died at father's death place on father's death date married at parents' marriage place on parents' marriage date to mother's maiden name born at mother's birth place on mother's birth date died at mother's death place on mother's death date.

Repeat the form for each generation.

DOCUMENTING YOUR FACTS

Remember as you work through your family lineage that you must document each statement for each generation. You should begin collecting photocopies of all the source materials which prove the validity of each statement. Do not cut corners in an effort to speed the process. The more sources you can provide the stronger your proof will be. Any extra documentation you have may serve as supplementary proof for a given statement.

SOURCE MATERIALS

Your documentation should consist of primary source materials such as the following:

1. Vital Records of Birth, Marriage, and/or Death.
2. Bible or Church Records.
3. Marriage Bonds and Licenses.
4. Mortality Schedules and Cemetery Records.
5. Probate Records.
6. Land Records of Deed or Division of Property.
7. Guardianship or Orphan's Court Records.
8. Contemporary Family Letters & Records.
9. Tax Assessments or Exemption Lists.
10. Military or Pension Records.
11. Federal or State Census Records (which state family relationships).
12. Cattle and Hog Marks.

Secondary source material should be acceptable ***only*** when it cites the source used to prove what is published, or when it reproduces the primary source itself.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Anyone who can document his or her lineage showing that he/she is a descendant of one of the following Mayflower passengers is eligible to apply for membership in the Society of Mayflower Descendants:

John Alden	Stephen Hopkins
Isaac Allerton	John Howland
John Billington	Richard More
William Bradford	Degory Priest
William Brewster	Thomas Rogers
Peter Browne	Henry Samson
James Chilton	George Soule
Francis Cooke	Myles Standish
Edward Doty	Richard Warren
Francis Eaton	William White
Moses Fletcher	Edward Winslow
Edward Fuller	William Mullins
Samuel Fuller	John Tilley